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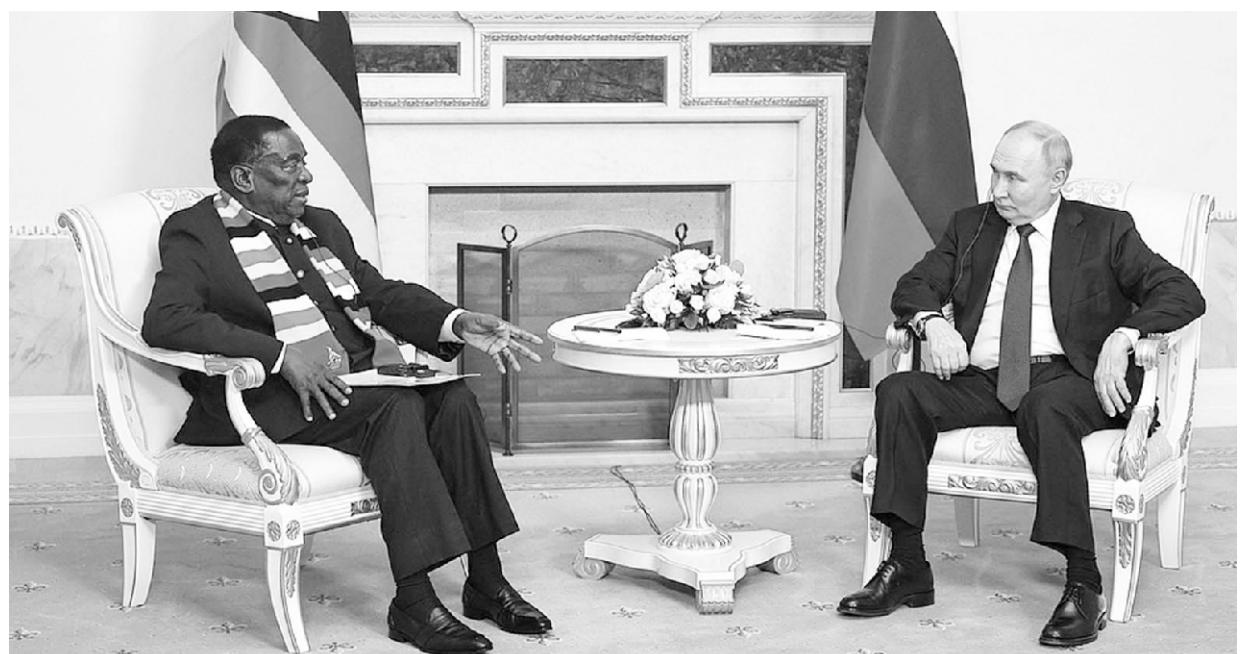
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Putin Hails Zimbabwe as Strategic Ally



MOSCOW, Russia – Russian President Vladimir Putin has praised the close alignment between Russia and Zimbabwe on key global issues, underscoring Moscow's growing push to deepen ties with African nations amid shifting geopolitical alliances. Speaking during a high-level meeting with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa in Moscow on Friday, Putin said both countries share "very close" views on most current international matters. According to TASS, the official Russian news agency, the Russian leader stressed the importance of a multipolar world rooted in the principles of international law.

"Russia and Zimbabwe take common or very close positions on most topical issues on the international agenda. We seek a just, multipolar world order based on the rule of international law," Putin said, as quoted by TASS. The Russian president also expressed appreciation for Zimbabwe's consistent support of Russian initiatives on global

platforms, particularly at the United Nations.

"We are grateful for your country's support of our initiatives at the UN and other multilateral platforms," Putin told Mnangagwa.

This meeting comes at a time when Russia is actively strengthening diplomatic, economic, and military ties across the African continent in response to its increasing isolation from the West following its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Zimbabwe, long subject to Western sanctions itself, has emerged as one of Moscow's key allies in Southern Africa.

Putin highlighted the significance of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum, recalling the inaugural ministerial meeting held in Sochi in November 2023. He confirmed that preparations are underway for another ministerial conference later this year.

"We are preparing for another ministerial conference at the end of this year and expect to see your country's Foreign Minister there," he said.

Mnangagwa's visit marks another chapter in the two nations' strategic partnership, which includes cooperation in mining, energy, education, and defence. In recent years, Russia's state-owned companies have increased their footprint in Zimbabwe's extractive industries, particularly in platinum and diamond mining.

In his remarks, Mnangagwa welcomed the deepening ties with Moscow, stating that Zimbabwe values its "historic friendship" with Russia and is committed to expanding collaboration in all sectors.

The leaders are expected to sign several bilateral agreements aimed at enhancing trade and investment, as well as cooperation in agriculture and technology transfer. This engagement reinforces Moscow's intention to position itself as a global partner for the Global South, offering an alternative to Western influence through diplomacy, mutual development projects, and military partnerships. **-Thezimbawemail**

Interest in Geza might be waning



Blessed Geza

purports to crusade for. It is high time we start asking where his backers are and why they are quiet when the ship is clearly sinking.

Maybe I am being too hasty in judging Geza, but I am sure I am not the only one who is questioning why we are only seeing one person and nobody else. Yes, he may be the face of his crusade, but surely he cannot do it alone. I am reminded of Simba Makoni's exit from Zanu PF, when he claimed there were many that were backing his Mavambo outfit.

But in the end, it was only Dumiso Dabengwa, among Zanu PF stalwarts, who publicly backed him, the rest remained where they were or at worst, played both sides like the cowards they were.

Makoni did not do as well as he had expected at the 2008 presidential elections, but if he had more public backers, I am sure that he would have done much better. When Geza called for the first protests on March 31, he told us there would be "action".

To this day, we have no idea what that action was and what the objective was. Geza over promised and frankly did not deliver. I am sure in his heart of hearts, he knows that March 31 did not go as he had hoped, but instead of accepting that, he was back on YouTube telling us that it had been an unparalleled success.

He was clearly in denial. Because he was not honest with himself, Geza called for more "stay-aways", which to be honest were monumental flops. Again, he was in denial, claiming these were also successful. Ludicrously, he claimed people had stayed away in their minds and hearts.

If Geza and his backers had been a little more honest with themselves after March 31, they would have gone back to the proverbial drawing board and asked what did not work and why.

Instead, they chose to continue flogging a dead horse and that has harmed their credibility. I am not sure what his next step is, but for now, he probably needs to take some time off to reflect on his previous steps.

Geza is popular because what he says resonates with a lot of people, people that had hoped that this administration was genuine when it set out to fight corruption, but have increasingly become delusional, as their tax dollars seem to be funding corrupt lifestyles.

In a country where speaking out could lead to imprisonment or prolonged prosecution, Geza became the voice of the voiceless and for a while, a hero. However, after a few months beating this path, Geza needs to rethink his processes lest he joins a growing number of people who bravely faced off with Zanu PF, but fizzled without as much of a meaningful impact.

Nqaba Matshazi writes here in his personal capacity. - **Bulawayo24**

NATO hit by corruption scandal



Multiple countries have launched corruption investigations into the US-led alliance's procurement system. Police have conducted arrests and searches in several countries as part of a corruption investigation involving current and former employees of the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA). The raids, coordinated by Eurojust – the EU's criminal justice agency – took place in Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and the US. The alliance told Luxembourg Times on Wednesday that NSPA's main headquarters in the Grand Duchy had initiated the probe.

"NATO – including the NSPA – is working closely with law enforcement to ensure that perpetrators are brought to

justice," spokeswoman Allison Hart said. "We are actively strengthening our ability to mitigate risks and root out misconduct," she added. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte told reporters in Ankara on Thursday that the military bloc was working with the authorities. "We want to get to the root of this," Rutte said.

The public prosecutor's office in Luxembourg said that documents were seized pertaining to suspicions that NSPA staffers had "used their positions to enrich themselves." Two people were arrested in Belgium, and three in the Netherlands, officials said. Belgian prosecutors stated that the investigation centers around "possible irregularities in awarding contracts to defence contractors for the

purchase of military equipment for NATO such as ammunition and drones." The probe also looks at possible sharing of confidential information by NSPA employees with defense companies and money laundering.

The Dutch authorities said they arrested a former official with the Dutch Defense Ministry at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol on Monday. The former civil servant is suspected of taking bribes in 2023 regarding the awarding of defense contracts.

The investigation takes place as NATO members are looking for ways to boost their own defense and produce more weapons to be delivered to Ukraine. In March, the European Commission unveiled a plan to raise €800 billion (\$896 billion) to "rearm" the EU. **-Rt**

Diplomatic villas illuminate Mt Hampden



The transformation of Mt Hampden into Zimbabwe's new administrative hub is steadily progressing, marked by the completion of eight state-of-the-art villas at the Diplomatic Village, a key milestone in the development of the emerging capital. A site visit on Monday revealed the fully completed villas, nestled in beautifully landscaped surroundings, with additional units at various stages of construction. The villas, set among lush green lawns and gently rolling terrain, reflect the Government's commitment to world-class urban infrastructure, aligning with the nearby new Parliament Building.

The Diplomatic Village features wide, freshly surfaced roads that meander through the estate, with underground drainage systems and manicured verges, enhancing both the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the area. The villas themselves showcase expansive glass panes and modern finishes, highlighting architectural excellence and a commitment to creating a refined urban space.

Experts in urban planning have lauded the Diplomatic Village as a symbol of renewal and forward-thinking leadership, exemplifying a vision for a more organised and

sustainable urban landscape for Zimbabwe's future. Speaking at the site visit, Local Government and Public Works Minister Daniel Garwe emphasized that the completion of these villas is a testament to the progress being made towards Vision 2030, which envisions modern, sustainable, and affordable infrastructure and housing for all Zimbabweans.

"Vision 2030 speaks to the provision of modern, sustainable, and affordable infrastructure and housing for all," Minister Garwe said, reinforcing the Government's commitment to achieving this goal. He also cited the reconstruction of the Mbare Traders Market as another example of the Government's dedication to urban transformation.

Special Presidential Investment Advisor Dr Paul Tungwarara highlighted the completion of the villas as a clear sign of real progress, noting that they reflect the President's dedication to national development.

"The President is walking the talk on national development. These tangible developments reflect a strong commitment to uplifting communities," Dr Tungwarara said.

While Deputy Chief Secretary Engineer Amos Marawa is currently out of the country, an official statement conveyed his confidence in the project, expressing that the progress at Mt Hampden demonstrates the commitment of President Mnangagwa's administration to delivering quality developments.

"This is a clear sign that we are serious about creating a world-class diplomatic and Government centre," the statement read.

The villas were constructed using pre-stressed concrete slabs manufactured in Switzerland, ensuring superior quality control. The Swiss construction company, Mabetex Group, was contracted to lay the precast walls, while local company Bitumen World handled the foundations and roads. Mabetex, known for large-scale construction and urban development projects, has contributed significantly to the overall quality of this initiative, reinforcing the vision for a modern and thriving Zimbabwe.

As construction continues on subsequent phases of the Diplomatic Village, these first eight villas offer a promising preview of the country's urban future-refined, organised, and full of potential. **-The Herald**

President to launch 56 000t grain silo facility

All is in place for the commissioning of the country's first-ever Artificial Intelligence-powered grain silo by President Mnangagwa in Kwekwe, Midlands Province, today. The milestone development is part of the Second Republic's broader initiatives to embrace appropriate technologies across the sectors of the economy, with agriculture being one of the major pillars of the economy.

This advancement marks a crucial step in the Second Republic's initiative to adopt modern technologies across various sectors, with agriculture leading the digital transformation. The 56 000-tonne facility, which includes seven cutting-edge silos, was expected to have received its first grain delivery in preparation for today's official launch.

Kwekwe District Development Coordinator, Mr Fortune Mpungu, said all was set for today's historic event with the Silos now ready for commissioning by the President. "It is all systems go, and we are happy to be the district to embrace such a modern facility," he said.

The new silos have a combined capacity of 56 000 tonnes and are part of the Government's initiative to construct new technologically advanced silos across the country to revolutionise the agricultural sector. Midlands Provincial Affairs and Devolution Minister Owen Ncube yesterday toured the silos as part of the preparations for the official commissioning by President Mnangagwa.

"Everything is now ready for the commissioning of our new silos and we are so excited as a province," he said. Minister Ncube stated that the new grain silos will play a critical role in enhancing the country's food storage capacity, reducing post-harvest losses and ensuring food security.

"By providing a safe and efficient way to store grains, the silos will enable farmers to preserve their produce for longer

periods, thereby stabilising food supplies and prices," he said.

Minister Ncube said the initiative is expected to have a positive impact on the livelihoods of thousands of farmers and their families in Midlands Province and beyond. The new silos feature drying and cleaning facilities, a significant upgrade from the old system as the country modernises its grain storage infrastructure.

Midlands Provincial vice chairman Cde Lewis Matutu stated that today's commissioning is a testament to President Mnangagwa's dedication to enhancing the country's agricultural capabilities.

"President @edmnangagwa will commission 56 000t silos in Kwekwe Midlands province next week on May 5, 2025. Previously, Midlands and Matabeleland South among other provinces used to rely on silos in Chegutu, disadvantaging many farmers with the potential to support the economic recovery of the country, it's over!!!," he wrote on his official Xhandle.

Cde Matutu emphasised the importance of such infrastructure in the country's development matrix. ". . . focus on what is critical, food security is very important for our country, before we think of exporting our produce to other countries. "Silos usually store strategic grain critical to feed our nation particularly areas in the project is completed. **-Herald**

facility is now up and running and ready for the commissioning by the President for it to start receiving the grain from this current successful season."

He said the necessary preparations have been done to ensure today's commissioning is a success. Unlike traditional storage units, the new silos are equipped with advanced technologies that integrate AI, internet of things (IoT) sensors and automated environmental regulation.

The silos are strategically positioned to sustain milling industries along the agricultural value chain, both upstream and downstream, creating employment and sustaining livelihoods. By investing in infrastructure that supports the agricultural sector, the Government is creating opportunities for value addition and increased economic activity.

The commissioning of the grain silos aligns with the Government's efforts to promote industrialisation and economic growth, and is expected to have a lasting impact on the lives of Zimbabweans.

This state-of-the-art facility is being implemented across 14 Grain Marketing Board (GMB) depots nationwide, complementing the existing 750 000 tonnes silo capacity, with the country targeting a 1.5 million tonnes strategic grain reserve once the project is completed. **-Herald**



Kwekwe District Development Coordinator, Mr Fortune Mpungu

Zimbabwe: High Court Slams City of Harare for 'Irrational' Land Grab in Kuwadzana



Judge Justice Regis Dembure overturned the CoH's decision, citing unfairness in a judgement dated 2 May 2025.

"It is not in dispute that the applicant contributed to the development of the stands in question. The applicant (BK Housing Cooperative Society Limited) was made to pay for survey fees, and the survey and pegging of the stands were carried out at its expense by a surveyor appointed by the first respondent (City of Harare)," the Judge said.

Justice Dembure also noted that BK Housing Cooperative Society Limited's members were authorized by the CoH, through letters dated July 3, 2019, to pay administration fees of ZW\$500.00 for the stands, in accordance with the council's resolution. Additionally, they were required to pay the land's intrinsic value based on internal valuation instructions.

"Given these facts, I agree that it was grossly unreasonable or irrational for the City of Harare to make the resolution it did," he said. The Court criticized CoH's decision, finding it illogical to allow illegal occupiers to take over the land while requiring BK

Housing Cooperative Society Limited to follow lengthy procedures. Moreover, Justice Dembure observed that the absence of alternative land, coupled with BK Housing Cooperative's lengthy wait since 2017, indicated that CoH had not given due consideration to the facts.

Justice Dembure said Hebert Chitepo Housing Cooperative and its members unlawfully occupied the stands, taking the law into their own hands. Allowing them to remain would effectively sanction their illegality.

He ruled that CoH's decision should be reviewed and set aside. Permitting it to stand would unjustly reward Hebert Chitepo Housing Cooperative's members for their illegal actions, while BK Housing Cooperative's members, who made significant financial contributions, would be unfairly penalized.

Justice Dembure has ordered the CoH to complete the allocation process for residential stands to members of BK Housing Cooperative and has further ruled that the CoH shall bear the costs of the application. **-allafrica.com**

Gov't cancels 701 diplomatic and service passports for former Ministers and spouses, MPs & other officials

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced the cancellation of diplomatic and passport services for former Ministers and their spouses, former members of Parliament and other state officials who previously served under the erstwhile Akufo-Addo government. The cancellation of the diplomatic passport takes effect from Tuesday, May 6, 2025. A statement from the Ministry announced rendering the diplomatic passports invalid for international travel.

The Ministry had earlier announced on January 15 2025 March 10 2025, a recall of Diplomatic and Service Passports from the affected individuals. "All other persons holding official passports not currently serving in any official capacity for the State, or otherwise holding any position that falls under the requirements of sections 6 and 7 of the Passports and Travel Certificates Act, 1967 (NLCD 155)," the Ministry stated.

The categories of individuals affected by this



Ambassadors and Dependents

- Religious and Traditional Leaders
- Businessmen and Entrepreneurs
- Former Government Functionaries

The Ministry acknowledged the compliance of 407 holders of Diplomatic and 403 Service Passports, who duly returned their passports in line with the recall directive issued earlier.

Consequently, owing to the failure or refusal of the other holders to comply with the directive, the underlisted 341 unreturned Diplomatic and 360 Service Passports bearing the following serial numbers have been hereby cancelled with immediate effect on the instructions of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa.

"All the affected passports have been placed on the stop-list and shall be confiscated from any person attempting to travel with same," the statement added. **-3News**

GCC commissions new service vehicles



Minister of State for Midlands Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Owen Ncube



Gweru City Council has acquired a new minibus and three service vehicles worth a total of US\$165 000, aimed at enhancing service delivery across the city. The vehicles were officially commissioned by the Minister of State for Midlands Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Owen Ncube, during a ceremony held at the Gweru Fire Station.

The event was attended by

councillors, council management, residents and Government officials. "Today's event illustrates council's commitment to the Second Republic's devolution and decentralisation agenda, as well as corporate governance frameworks that empower communities and promote local decision-making, transparency and accountability," said Minister Ncube.

He stressed the importance of sound budget performance,

underpinned by the statutory obligations and mandates entrusted to local authorities.

Minister Ncube also highlighted the relevance of President Mnangagwa's "Call to Action: No Compromise on Service Delivery" blueprint, which sets clear performance benchmarks for local authorities as key sub-national governance structures in the drive to achieve an empowered upper-middle-income society ahead of

2030.

Accordingly, he commended Gweru City Council for prioritising the provision of key infrastructure and the procurement of service vehicles and equipment essential for reliable and efficient service delivery to both residents and the business community.

"Not long ago, we were here commissioning fire tenders, ambulances, service vehicles, and

farm equipment to support cereal production for the revival of Go Beer operations. I'm pleased to note that farming activities have been revitalised, Go Beer is back on the market, non-functional traffic lights are being repaired, and most importantly, water supply to residents has significantly improved. Keep up the good work," he said.

Minister Ncube urged other local authorities in the province to emulate Gweru's example by fostering accountability, transparency and the timely, impartial and equitable delivery of services to residents.

"Priority must be given to the provision of market stalls, support for the growth of the SME sector, creation of a favourable investment climate through digital technologies, road maintenance, reliable water supply, waste management, and the modernisation of infrastructure. These efforts should complement the tangible and impactful signature programmes implemented by the Second Republic under the leadership of President Mnangagwa," he said.

To strengthen development control, local authorities in the Midlands Province have submitted their Master Plans in line with Government directives.

"The moratorium on land use changes must be strictly observed, as it supports the Smart City Concept adopted by the Second Republic since its inception in November 2017," said Minister Ncube.

He said that the newly commissioned vehicles should translate into improved service delivery and contribute to transforming the livelihoods of residents.

Gweru City Council Mayor, Councillor Martin Chivhoko, said the acquisition of the utility vehicles is part of a broader strategy to enhance operations as the City of Progress works towards achieving smart city status.

"The trucks will improve our efficiency, enabling us to respond more swiftly to faults and other service delivery issues. We are on a journey towards delivering excellent services, and these vehicles will make that goal more attainable," he said. -Herald

Columbus DDB

**The Board, Management, and Staff at
NetOne Cellular (Private) Limited
proudly join the nation in commemorating
Zimbabwe's Independence Day.**

At NetOne, we are committed to connecting every Zimbabwean, empowering communities, and fostering growth through innovative communication solutions. Join us as we celebrate our independence with pride! Let's come together to cherish our heritage, embrace our diversity, and look forward to a prosperous tomorrow.

Happy 45th Independence Day, Zimbabwe!

Giant lithium miner displaces villagers in Zimbabwe

A tense standoff is unfolding in Bikita, where eight families settled on George Nollen Farm under Chief Maroza in the year 2000, as part of Zimbabwe's land reform programme, are now facing eviction. The relocation is being prompted by Bikita Minerals Pvt Ltd, a lithium mining company, which asserts that the land occupied by the families falls within its lease area.

The families, who have been residing in the area for over two decades, are caught in a dispute that pits their right to shelter and land against the commercial interests of the mining company. The company's claim has raised concerns about the future of the farmers, who have been cultivating the land as part of the country's land reform process.

Chief Maroza confirmed the development, noting that the matter requires broader consultation. He explained that legal positions are being taken and a range of potential solutions, including the possibility of creating memorandums of agreement, are under consideration. However, he refrained from preempting the situation, as the processes are still ongoing.

"Eight families face eviction by the company and the situation requires broader consultation and legal positions taken," Chief Maroza said. "We cannot pre-empt it now since we still have some processes to be completed on the side of my appointment." Bikita District Development Coordinator Bernard Hadzirabwi clarified that the mining company would cover all costs associated with the relocation of the affected families. He confirmed that the affected villagers, including residents like Adonia Togara, Loice Tsinyamai, Rejoice Ruveno, Deliwe Ncube, and Caroline Zinyemba, will be moved to another area.

"What happened is the villagers occupied the area which was reserved for Bikita Minerals and the company will literally pay for all relocation costs," Hadzirabwi stated. The affected families expressed a mix of emotions about the upcoming move, with some resigned to the situation, while others voiced their concerns over the fairness of the process.

"It is really hard to be evicted, but we do not have any other option," said Caroline Zinyemba, one of the affected residents. "We just hope we will be compensated fairly since we are the affected ones. Mostly these people make promises they cannot fulfil." Loice Tsinyamai, another resident, appealed to the government for intervention, fearing that their relocation may not be handled justly.

"We hope that the government will rescue us from this eviction, but we heard that they are working closely with the miners," Tsinyamai said. "The mining company is giving us pressure to evict the area. We hope that we will

be relocated to a better place." Bikita Rural District Council Ward 11 Councillor Lawrence Vhovha confirmed that the matter has been reported to Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), with hopes that legal representation will help resolve the issue in favor of the affected families.

"We reported the case to the ZLHR, and we hope they will resolve the matter," Vhovha said.

The legal fight surrounding the eviction has drawn attention from various rights groups, with Community Tolerance Reconciliation and Development (COTRAD) voicing concerns about the government's responsibility to protect its citizens from arbitrary evictions. In a statement, COTRAD emphasized the importance of respecting the constitutional rights of the affected individuals, particularly the right to shelter and agricultural land.

"The government should respect and fulfill fundamental human rights set out in the statutes, in particular the right to freedom from arbitrary evictions, the right to shelter and the right to agricultural land," COTRAD stated.

Meanwhile, in Malipati, Ward 15 of Chiredzi South district, residents are also voicing fears of evictions due to pressure from third-party investors. However, after community dialogue meetings organized by COTRAD, the residents were empowered to approach legal representatives to fight back against the forced evictions.

A letter from Matutu and Mureri legal practitioners, dated May 1, 2025, highlights the coercion of villagers by the village head to donate their land to third-party investors. The legal team demanded that the village head stop pressuring residents into land deals that violate national land laws and principles of consent.

The eviction plans, which involve erecting fences and employing security guards to prevent landowners from accessing their land, have escalated tensions in the affected areas. The imposition of these measures is seen as a violation of the villagers' socio-cultural and economic rights, undermining their traditional livelihoods and rights to land.

"Evictions in Zimbabwe have been characterised by excessive and unwarranted use of force by law enforcement against settlers," the letter warned, noting the potential for escalation in both Bikita and Malipati. As both disputes unfold, it remains to be seen how the Zimbabwean government will balance the interests of mining companies with the rights of citizens who have lived on the lands for decades. Meanwhile, the pressure is mounting on local authorities and civil rights groups to safeguard the affected communities' rights to their land.

-Bulawayo24

